mission is already conducting oil exploration of the Cuddalore–Pondicherry Coast.

Revision of Pay Scale of Assistants in ICAR

1500. SHRI PHOOL CHAND VERMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any representations from the Associations of Assistants working in the various institutes of Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi for revision of the pay scale to bring at par with the pay scale of the Assistants working in the various Ministries;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI K.C.LENKA): (a) Sir, Representations from individuals and Joint Staff Councils of ICAR Institutes have been received in this regard.

(b) and (c). Assistants working in some of the ICAR Institutes have filed an application/petition in the Central Administrative Tribunal requesting for adoption of pay scale of Rs. 1640–2900 at par with various Ministries. The matters *sub-judice.*

Increasing the Price of Pepper

1501. SHRI PALK K.M. MATHEW: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Kerala has submitted a proposal to the Union Government for increasing the price of pepper to Rs. 4,000/- per quintal;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b). The Union Government has not received any formal proposal from the Govt. of Kerala for fixation of floor prices of pepper or increasing the price of pepper. However, the matter was raised by the Hon'ble Member under Rule 377 regarding fixation of floor price of pepper at Rs. 6000/- per quintal.

(c). Since major part of the production of pepper is exported, its price stabilisation programme will have to be considered taking into consideration both domestic and international prices as well as production and internal demand. Already, prevailing domestic prices of pepper are not very competitive in the international market. Any kind of price support operation would further increase the FOB cost of our pepper, making it further uncompetative and may result in fall in exports.

[*Translation*]

Research Magazines of ICAR

1502. SHRI VINAY KATIYAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of bilingual research magazines being brought out by the ICAR in English and Hindi;

(b) the efforts being made by the ICAR to bring out Hindi edition of research magazines where only English version is brought out; and

(c) the research magazines being

brought out by private organisations with assistance from the Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI K.C.LENKA): (a) Sir, The ICAR is bringing out four research journals and 2 semi-technical magazines in English and 3 semi-technical magazines in Hindi. None of the magazines is bilingual.

(b) All the 3 semi-technical magazines brought out in Hindi, are research based.

(c) During the last three years, 90 journals, brought out by private organisations, were financed by matching grants from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

[English]

Statutory Status to SCs/STs Commission

1503. SHRI RAM NIHORE RAI:
KUMARI UMA BHARTI:

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission has been accorded statutory status;

(b) if so, the details of the powers and jurisdiction of the said Commission; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) to (c). Under the Constitution (65th Amendment) Act, 1990, constitutional status would be accorded to the National Commission on SC/ST which will be constituted shortly. The functions of the Commission are contained in the Constitution (65th Amendment) Act, 1990.

Horticultural Development in Kerala

1504. SHRI V.S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state the total amount allotted for the development of horticulture in Kerala during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): The financial allocation to Kerala for horticultural development during 1989–90, 1990–91 and 1991–92 is as under:–

Year	*Funds alloted (Amount in Rs.)*
1989–90	1,24,28,950.00
1990–91	1,59,94,060.00
1991–92	6,24,80,625.00

Ethnic Groups on Indo–Burma Border

1506. SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of ethnic groups which are living on both sides of the Indo–Burma border;

(b) whether there is any agreement between the two countries to facilitate interaction among the groups;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any facility exists for the movement across the border for legitimate and recognised purposes by these groups; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?